

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

211131Z Dec 01

2001HOCHI01411 - UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED PTQ4442

PAGE 01 HO CHI 01411 211152Z  
ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	UTED-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OPIC-01	PC-01	PRS-00	P-00
	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PRM-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/008W		
					-----4EEC0B	211153Z	/38

FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5812  
INFO AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 001411

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/BCLTV AND EAP/PD/MSPEER  
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR DRL/IRF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM KIRF VM ETMIN HUMANR RELFREE

SUBJECT: PROTESTANTS WARNED NOT TO "CAUSE PROBLEMS" AT CHRISTMAS

1. (SBU) SEVERAL HCMC PROTESTANT "HOUSE CHURCH" LEADERS  
TOLD POLOFF ON DECEMBER 19, THAT LOCAL POLICE HAD  
CALLED THEM IN INDIVIDUALLY DURING THE WEEK OF DECEMBER  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 HO CHI 01411 211152Z  
9, TO WARN THEM NOT TO USE CHRISTMAS AS AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO "CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT." THE PROTESTANT  
LEADERS SAID THEY INTERPRETED THIS WARNING NOT AS A  
PROHIBITION ON RELIGIOUS CHRISTMAS GATHERINGS, BUT  
RATHER AS A CAUTION NOT TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT AT  
ANY LARGE PUBLIC GATHERINGS AT CHRISTMAS TIME. THEY  
EXPECT TO GO AHEAD WITH A PLANNED GATHERING OF UP TO  
1000 PROTESTANTS AT A CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE CITY WHOSE  
PRIESTS HAVE AGREED TO LET THEM "BORROW" THE CHURCH FOR  
THE PROTESTANT CHRISTMAS SERVICE.

2. (SBU) THE PROTESTANT LEADERS WERE AWARE THAT ON  
DECEMBER 11, SEVERAL PROTESTANT PASTORS FROM VIETNAM'S  
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WERE SUMMONED TO HANOI TO HEAR A  
SIMILAR WARNING. THE VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY REPORTED THAT  
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER NGUYEN VAN AN HAD ASKED THE  
PASTORS TO "CONVEY HIS MERRY CHRISTMAS WISHES TO THE  
PROTESTANT COMMUNITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS," BUT  
ALSO WARNED THEM TO "STAY VIGILANT AND FIGHT BAD  
ELEMENTS WHO ABUSE RELIGION TO UNDERMINE NATIONAL  
UNITY." SEPARATELY, A RELIABLE PROTESTANT SOURCE TOLD  
EMBASSY POLOFF THAT THE GVN COMMITTEE ON RELIGION HAD  
SUMMONED SIX CENTRAL HIGHLAND ETHNIC MINORITY LEADERS  
OF THE RECENTLY LEGALIZED SOUTHERN EVANGELICAL CHURCH  
OF VIETNAM TO HANOI FROM DECEMBER 7-16 FOR MEETINGS  
WITH VARIOUS GVN OFFICIALS.

3. (SBU) THE MONTAGNARD FOUNDATION, INC., BASED IN  
SOUTH CAROLINA, PUT OUT A PRESS RELEASE THAT INCLUDED A  
PLEA TO PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY  
TO MONITOR AN EVENT IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WHERE  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 HO CHI 01411 211152Z  
"HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF HILL TRIBE MONTAGNARDS WILL  
UNITE IN A PEACEFUL PRAYER VIGIL TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS  
AND CALL FOR AN END TO MARTIAL LAW BY HANOI'S COMMUNIST  
AUTHORITIES AND TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS  
FREEDOM IN VIETNAM." THE MONTAGNARD FOUNDATION  
ALLEGEDLY WAS INVOLVED IN ORGANIZING ETHNIC MINORITY  
DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS LAST FEBRUARY  
AND MARCH. A RELIABLE PROTESTANT SOURCE TOLD POLOFF  
THAT THE MONTAGNARD FOUNDATION WAS INVOLVED IN  
ORGANIZING A PROTESTANT CELEBRATION OF APPROXIMATELY  
2000 ETHNIC GIA RAI MINORITY PERSONS IN CHU A THAI  
VILLAGE IN GIA LAI PROVINCE LAST CHRISTMAS. (COMMENT:  
POST BELIEVES IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THE ETHNIC MINORITY  
PROTESTANTS COULD ORGANIZE A SIMILARLY LARGE GATHERING  
THIS CHRISTMAS BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING EMPHASIS ON  
SECURITY BY PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT AUTHORITIES IN THE  
AREA. END COMMENT.)

14. (SBU) THE HCMC PROTESTANT LEADERS SAID THEY HAVE HEARD FROM PROTESTANT PASTORS IN OTHER PROVINCES WHO HAVE ALSO BEEN WARNED NOT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CHRISTMAS TO "CAUSE PROBLEMS." THEY SAID THEY WERE UNAWARE OF ANY PLANNED LARGE GATHERING IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS. THEY EMPHASIZED THAT THEIR OWN CHRISTMAS SERVICE IN HCMC WILL BE A RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION AND WILL NOT TOUCH ON POLITICS IN ANY WAY.

YAMAUCHI

UNCLASSIFIED